

Greek American Oral History Project

Oral History Interview
with
Nick Kamilos

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Sacramento, California

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[Session 1, April 21, 2006]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

VANG: Hi. My name is Payne Vang. I am doing the interview with Nick Kamilos for the Sacramento Greek American Oral History Project, as a part of the Capitol Campus Oral History Program at Sac State. Today is April 21, 2006 at 2:25 p.m. Let's begin by talking a little bit about your background. Where were you born and when?

KAMILOS: I was born in Piraeus; Piraeus, Greece in October 16, 1934.

VANG: Okay. Tell me a bit about your mother.

KAMILOS: Uh. My mother?

VANG: Uh hum. When and where was she born?

KAMILOS: She was born in Lixouri, Kefallonia, which was an island west of Greece in May 26, 1904 and she passed away November 9th 2005 at 101 years old.

VANG: Wow. Tell me a bit about your father. When and where was your father born?

KAMILOS: My father was born also at Luxouri, Kefallonia, Greece, which is on the west side of Greece. It is an island on the Ionian Sea. He came to the United States in 1908; where he worked in the mines up in Lincoln, that was the clay mines in Lincoln. And in 1915, he opened up his first market in Sacramento at 8th and J Streets. In 1923, he was the first, one of the

first, leases of the Sacramento Public Market, which is a historic site now on 13th and J. And where one of the meeting rooms in the Sheraton hotel is named after him.

VANG: Can you describe the place in Greece from which your family migrated? What kind of place (city or region or country) was it?

KAMILOS: It's an island. I like said it's of the...it's between Greece and Italy but it is closer to Greece. It's on the Ionian Sea. There's three islands in that area. There's Corfu, Kefallonia, and Zakynthos [Zonkyville (phonetic)]. The island is the, Kefallonia, is the largest of the three. And that's where my parents grew up. My father came to the United States like I said, in 1908, but he returned back in 1931. Where he started a...an import or export business from exporting produce from...actually Sacramento but out of San Francisco. That was mostly apples, oranges, you know citrus, potatoes, onions, uh, through the Panama Canal to the Mediterranean. And that's uh, his office was there in Piraeus, Greece, which is the port of Athens. That was where he met my wife, my mother rather. He met my mother from Kefallonia and married. And I was born there in Piraeus where he had his office.

VANG: Well, you described part of it but how did your parents earn a living in Greece?

KAMILOS: How did they what?

VANG: Earn a...what did they work as in Greece?

KAMILOS: My mother never worked. My mother was a graduate of the University of Athens. My father was a merchant, you know, in export. They lived there in Piraeus where he had his office.

VANG: What year did you guys end up moving here to the United States?

KAMILOS: We came here in December third of 1936.

VANG: What early memories do you have of Greece?

KAMILOS: None. [laughs]

VANG: None. [laughs] Don't remember anything?

KAMILOS: Yeah. I don't/can't remember nothing at all. Just only what I've been told.

VANG: When did the first members of your family immigrate from Greece?

KAMILOS: Well, it was just my father, you know, in 1908, through the Ellis Island. And then when we immigrated from Greece. It was my...I have a sister that is a year younger than me. She was a year old and I was two years old. My mother and my father we came back to...or he came back to the United States. He was an American citizen. He became an American citizen in 1922.

VANG: Okay. Do you know why he came to the United States? The first time?

KAMILOS: The first time there was a lot of people from Europe that were migrating. Immigrants that were coming to the United States what I understand by the boat loads. You know. They were processed through Ellis Island.

When we came...when I came, my father was an American citizen, the boat that we were on landed in Ellis Island but they un-boarded us and put us on a ferry and took us right to New York. Of course this was all stuff that's been told to me, I never, can't remember any of it.

VANG: That's okay. For what reasons did you or your family leave Greece?

KAMILOS: What was that?

VANG: What reasons did your family leave Greece?

KAMILOS: Well, my father felt that he just wanted to come back to the United States, you know, at that time. And of course he had a business here. He had the produce business in the Sacramento Public Market at that time. The store that he had on J Street and 8th, he sold that and went to the public market in 1923.

VANG: Was it a common decision to immigrate or did some in the family resist coming here?

KAMILOS: You mean for all of us? Yes it was. My mother was really anxious to come here.

VANG: She was looking forward to coming here. Oh, I see.

KAMILOS: My father had already been here. He didn't have any problems because he was already an American citizen and he had an American passport.

VANG: Right. Did any body...did her family object to her coming here?

KAMILOS: No, no, no. Her father and mother passed away many years ago prior when she was a teenager through an illness that struck the island at that time.

VANG: Do you know which illness that was?

KAMILOS: Yeah. It was diphtheria with the high fevers. Her mother, father and sister passed away. She was raised by her uncle.

VANG: Was this intended as a permanent move or temporary coming to the United States?

KAMILOS: What did we---

VANG: Was it a like, a permanent? Did they intend to stay here?

KAMILOS: Oh yeah. We stayed here. You mean, did we permanently stay here. Yeah.

VANG: Yeah...I guess, I was just like, what you know...When your parents were about to move here did they intend to just live here for the rest of their lives?

KAMILOS: Oh yes. Yeah. They never went back to Greece, neither one of them.

VANG: They didn't go back and visit?

KAMILOS: Nope. Never went back to visit. This is their home and ours.

VANG: Wow. Uh hum. How did each of your parents feel about the move?

KAMILOS: You mean coming here?

VANG: Uh, hum.

KAMILOS: Well my father liked it. He felt this was his home, you know, that's why he wanted to come back. He just felt that this was it. This was where he wanted his children to grow up.

VANG: How did you travel to the United States?

KAMILOS: What?

VANG: How did you travel to the United States?

KAMILOS: We came by ship to New York and then from New York, we came by train to Sacramento.

VANG: So do you recall anything of that journey?

KAMILOS: No. Nothing. Only what I've been told.

VANG: What things did your parents bring with you on the journey?

KAMILOS: They what? Remember I can't hear too well.

VANG: Okay, I'm sorry. What things did your parents bring?

KAMILOS: I really don't know. I know that there was a great big, uh, what do you call it, a steamship trunk. I remember that. I've seen it after I grew up and I asked my parents what it was for. What it was and they told me that's what they brought over with their clothes and things and everything in that.

VANG: So was it a like a big steamer trunk?

KAMILOS: See how big this table is, almost the size of the table and the height. [about a typical classroom table size] It's about that size. They call it

steamship trunk, or something like that. In Greek it's called a Byoulo.

[phonetic]

VANG: Did anyone meet you when you arrived here in the United States?

KAMILOS: No. Because you see my father already knew where to go and how to do it. He spoke English. My mother didn't. But he spoke English and understood English real well. Now when he came over here he didn't know nothing.

VANG: So did he have anybody to meet him here?

KAMILOS: I really don't know.

VANG: You don't know.

KAMILOS: Yeah. It was something that he never told me.

VANG: But when he first came, did he came straight to Sacramento?

KAMILOS: Yes, he had a brother here that came here before him.

VANG: So he already had a place to stay.

KAMILOS: Yeah.

VANG: Was Sacramento your first destination in the United States?

KAMILOS: Yes.

VANG: Where did you live initially after you arrived?

KAMILOS: [Do] you mean, where at?

VANG: Yeah.

KAMILOS: Lets see, the first place we lived was at 17th and F Street in Alkali Flats in Sacramento. Then my father bought a home in 33rd and C Street. And then when he retired in 1946, my father was...he bought a ranch out in the South Sacramento area; I didn't, my father did, and then we moved out there.

VANG: What was your family's economic condition on arrival?

KAMILOS: It was pretty good with my father because he had his business here in Sacramento. But when he came, I know that he didn't have nothing.

VANG: The first time?

KAMILOS: The first time, yeah. He came with nothing, practically. Just enough to get to Sacramento. I think his brother helped him.

VANG: Did you know what trade his brother was in?

KAMILOS: Well then, most of the Greeks that came here at that time were working mostly on the railroads or in mines. I mean like the pottery mines up in Lincoln and the railroads around Roseville and around Sacramento. That's where they mostly worked; more like laborer's back then.

VANG: Right. That's probably where he worked at.

KAMILOS: Yeah.

VANG: So, did your father just continued with his business when he came here to Sacramento?

KAMILOS: Yeah, he continued it. He went right with the Public Market back then. I should have brought you some pictures because I have some of those...from 1923.

VANG: Did your family have any problems trying to find work in California?

KAMILOS: No. Not at all.

VANG: What were your...I was going to say, what were your initial impressions of California but you were probably too young.

KAMILOS: I was too young.

VANG: Yeah. Did you know any English on arrival?

KAMILOS: No. No English at all.

VANG: You just spoke Greek at home?

KAMILOS: I spent two years in the first grade to learn English.

VANG: How did you begin to learn the language?

KAMILOS: Mostly with children in the neighborhood and then when I went to school, I started learning the first year, I had a hard time understanding English. But after I got half way through the year, I started picking it up. Then they held me back one year and I started learning it much better than the second year in the first grade. Then I was in the same grade as my sister because she was a grade behind me. Now I went through the whole twelve years with her. Everyone thought that we were twins.

VANG: [laughs] That's okay. Did you or others in your family pursue citizenship?

Why or why not? And how soon after arrival?

KAMILOS: Well, my father got his citizenship in 1922. My mother got her citizenship in 1955. And from 1952, until, 1953 rather, until 1955, I was in the service and because with my father being an American citizen, I didn't have any problems. I got my citizenship in 1956 so I would have some documentation that I'm an American citizen. Even though at that time, if one of your parents were an American citizen and you were born overseas, you automatically became an American citizen. And then they changed the laws, I think it was in 1939 I believe; it was 1939 or 1940.

VANG: What did you or your parents miss most after leaving Greece?

KAMILOS: What did we miss most?

VANG: Yes.

KAMILOS: I didn't miss nothing.

VANG: How about your parents?

KAMILOS: I don't think that my father missed anything because this was a completely different life for him. And for my mother...she was just very happy here. She enjoyed it. In fact, when she passed away, there was a big article on her in the paper with a picture and a big write up and with all like that.

VANG: What were your parents' names? I don't remember if I asked.

KAMILOS: You mean my father's name?

VANG: Yes.

KAMILOS: My father's name is Gerry Kamilos and my mother is Mary Annanthe [phonetic] Kamilos.

VANG: Did you or your family maintained contact with people in Greece?

KAMILOS: Very little. There really wasn't that big...Back then you couldn't make any phone calls or it was just a matter of letters and then war started, you know, World War II started. It was hard to get communications any way, even mail, it was all censored. So it was hard...My father's side was living but my mother's side they were all passed away or something.

VANG: Have you returned to Greece? When and why?

KAMILOS: I returned in 2000; first time in my life when I went back. I've been going there every year since then. And I'm leaving again this year.

VANG: Is there a reason why you started going?

KAMILOS: I just wanted to see where I came from. Where my heritage started and where I was born. And I did all that and I enjoyed going there. It seems like it was a different style of living, a life style. I just go there since I retired. I couldn't go there when I was working.

VANG: Did you visit the island only or did you visit the whole Greece?

KAMILOS: Yes. I spend usually about four days in Athens and I take a lot of tours. I tour all the places that I can go and every year I have a certain place that I go. And then I leave for the island. I don't fly over there at the island. I take the bus and the boat. Yeah, it's a real good experience. I stay there

for about a couple of weeks and then I come back. I stay in Athens for three days; then come back to the United States; come back home.

VANG: Overall, what difficulties did you have adjusting to aspects of life in the United States?

KAMILOS: Nothing really. I adjusted pretty good.

VANG: The following are questions concerning life here in Sacramento's Greek Community. Can you tell me the names and the birth years of your siblings?

KAMILOS: Yes. I have one son. He was born in October 29th, 1959. Another son, he was born in March 20th, 1962. And a daughter that was born July 12th, 1964.

VANG: What was your sister's name?

KAMILOS: My sister? It was Aldamadia [phonetic] or Madina [phonetic] is what she goes by.

VANG: So she was just born one year...

KAMILOS: She was born a year after I was. She was born there in Greece, also.

VANG: Did you have any other siblings besides your sister?

KAMILOS: Yes. I have a brother, Denise. I had a sister who passed away a year ago in September, Jo Ann. I don't know if you want their last names?

VANG: Sure. Yeah.

KAMILOS: It's Medina Fulgate [phonetic], Denise Kamilos, and Jo Ann Tingus [phonetic].

VANG: So two of you guys were born in Greece and the rest were born here?

KAMILOS: Right here in Sacramento.

VANG: Tell me about the houses where you grew up? Where was it? You described it earlier.

KAMILOS: What's that?

VANG: You described it earlier. Where the houses were located?

KAMILOS: Do you want the schools that I went to?

VANG: Sure.

KAMILOS: When I was in grammar school, I went to Theodore Judah and I lived at 33rd and C Street near the right across the street, what was called the American Can Company at the time. Then in 1946, right after I graduated from grammar school, I went to California Junior High, where my dad had bought a ranch in South Sacramento, which he had retired from the produce business at that time. We had a ranch of vineyards and all kinds of fruit trees. That was mostly where I grew up as a teenager. Then I went to C. K. McClatchy High School.

VANG: What were some of your earliest memories as a child?

KAMILOS: My earliest ones?

VANG: Uh hum.

KAMILOS: McKinley Park; we lived near there. Going to school. Sunday school in the old church down on 6th and N Street. Greek school that was at Washington School on 18th and E. Boy scouts and cub scouts. All these different activities so lot of memories, a lot of good memories.

VANG: Where you active in school outside of the classroom?

KAMILOS: Yes.

VANG: What did you do?

KAMILOS: You mean when I was in high school?

VANG: Yeah. Any grade level.

KAMILOS: In high school and junior high school, I was working all the time after school. I worked at a restaurant that was next to the Alhambra Theatre and that was in the '40s. Then I was working in 1946, my first job was working with Alhambra Grocery downtown, that's midtown, and then I worked in the public market, the people that bought my dad out. So I worked all the way through high school.

VANG: What chores did you have as a child and did your siblings do?

KAMILOS: Do you mean what choices did I have?

VANG: No. What chores around the house?

KAMILOS: Oh chores. On the farm, I used to help my dad pick vegetables, grapes and haul them out with a wheel barrel. And just worked on helping him

out. My dad was old. See my dad passed away forty years ago and he was 81 at the time.

VANG: Was he a lot older than your mom?

KAMILOS: Twenty years older. That was the style back then. The guys used to come over here, like my father, work, go back to Greece and marry some young girl. [laughs]

VANG: Right. What interests or past times or favorite games did you have?

KAMILOS: Past times, really not much. I was always working all the time.

VANG: Any favorite games or interests when you were growing up besides just working?

KAMILOS: I never got into sports. But it's mostly just church things that go on at church. I was involved with a lot of youth clubs and church.

VANG: Who were your closest friends and who did you play with?

KAMILOS: I played with the kids in the neighborhood. I have a lot of close friends that I grew up with and we're still friends.

VANG: Do you mind mentioning their names?

KAMILOS: Yeah, I can...there's Ernie Dolcomus [phonetic], Eugene Photos [phonetic]; Paul Myritsus [phonetic], Ernie Chotus [phonetic]. These are the guys that I when I was younger. Oh gosh, I can't remember all of them, [there was] a lot of them. That was just a few.

VANG: Did you monitor or set rules about whom your children could play with?

KAMILOS: Uh, not really. We usually have real good children. I mean it wasn't, you know, let's just say it's not like it is nowadays. Then it was different, life was different. The living lifestyle was different then it was now. You can leave your house open and not worry about it.

VANG: Was it a Greek American community that you grew up in?

KAMILOS: What?

VANG: Was it a lot of Greek Americans in your neighborhood?

KAMILOS: No.

VANG: Or was it a mix.

KAMILOS: Yeah. It was just mixed.

VANG: What were your parents' aspirations for you as you were growing up?

KAMILOS: Probably to be a lawyer, a doctor, but I wound up to be a grocery man.

VANG: Oh. What were your own aspirations as a youth, say in high school?

KAMILOS: After high school I went into the navy. And then when I got out, I went to, came here at Cal State [Sacramento], I didn't finish. I had one more semester to go but I was in...I was in...business...my education was in...actually, I forgot the term now, isn't that terrible. I went blank on it.

Uh business...

VANG: Business Administration?

KAMILOS: Business Administration. Gosh, I couldn't say the word. I was majoring in Business Administration. At that time I became an assistant manager

for Lucky stores, in one of their stores and it was hard for me to go to school, to finish school. Of course, I advanced there.

VANG: That's good. What year did you start going to college?

KAMILOS: In 1955, before they built this one [California State University, Sacramento]. One year before it opened.

VANG: Tell me about your experiences in high school.

KAMILOS: I was involved in a lot of programs.

VANG: What were they? What were the programs?

KAMILOS: I was in a drama class. I can't remember all the activities.

VANG: How long did you continue to live at home?

KAMILOS: I lived there until I went into the service. Then I came home and lived there for about another year or so and then got married.

VANG: When did you get married?

KAMILOS: In 1958.

VANG: Describe the local Greek community at the time of youth and/or your family's arrival here in Sacramento.

KAMILOS: You mean, when they arrived here?

VANG: Uh hum.

KAMILOS: What did you mean?

VANG: The local Greek community, what was it like?

KAMILOS: Our community, the Greek community?

VANG: Yes.

KAMILOS: It was really good. We have our old church was on 6th and N street. It was a lot of activities. I knew how to speak Greek so I got to communicate with the kids that knew how to speak Greek very well. Most of them, we're still friends. I know just about everybody that was there at that time. I was mostly involved in the Greek community.

VANG: Was there a Greek neighborhood, or concentration of Greek business somewhere in Sacramento? If so, please describe some of them and what you recalled about that area?

KAMILOS: There wasn't really that many. There was a lot of Greek businesses but they were spread out through Sacramento. There was mostly restaurants, a couple of bakeries. Those were more, not exactly for the Greek people, they were for everybody. There really wasn't anything that was just concentrated mostly Greek. [pause] Well, there was a Greek café down on 6th and K Street, where all the old timers used to hang around. You know, not us kids, just the old guys. They drink their coffee and play cards.

VANG: Were there any other cafes in the area? Or was it just that one?

KAMILOS: No, that was the only one. See the Greek community really wasn't that big at that time back in those years. Now it's pretty big; they've got three churches. Then it was very small. We had a small church and then they built the church over there on Alhambra. That opened up in 1950/51.

VANG: Were you active members of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation?

KAMILOS: Yes. Since uh...my father's been active since 1927 and we were involved with it... I've been involved with it since 1936. I also was on the church council for almost 15 years.

VANG: Tell me a bit about the role of the church in the community's life.

KAMILOS: Very good. Yes. It's children, like myself and my children, we've all grown up in the church and with our religion. You learn a lot and you know about your religion and everything. My wife she was a Sunday school teacher there at the church.

VANG: Can you talk about your parents or your own personal involvement with the church? Was your mom also-

KAMILOS: My father was one of the first board members when the church was first established back in 19-, well they started organizing the church in 1926 and it wasn't built until 1927 and that's the old church. We've all been very active. My sister, Madina, the one that was a year younger than me, she was the organist for the church for many years and in the choir. My other sister was involved in the choir. I didn't get involved in the choir because I couldn't sing. [laughs] I did a little bit but it just wasn't my thing. We've been involved with our church all our lives.

VANG: Did members of your family belong to the either American Hellenic

Educational Progressive Association or the Greek American Progressive Association?

KAMILOS: The first one, that's AHEPA. Yes, my mother has been a member for many years. I've been a member for forty-four years.

VANG: Can you tell me about the organization?

KAMILOS: It's uh...It's more in bringing the...it's not only for the Orthodox but also it doesn't necessary mean that you have to be Greek to belong to it. And it's an educational where they have different functions and uh...I can tell you but I don't really want to.

VANG: [Laughs] Don't want to say it.

KAMILOS: Huh. It's very educational, let's put it that way. They have speakers and stuff. Lot of things that go on. My wife belongs to it and my mother did. So we've been all involved in it.

VANG: Where you or they active in the organization?

KAMILOS: Have I been active?

VANG: Uh hum.

KAMILOS: Yes.

VANG: What kinds of activities did they organize?

KAMILOS: You mean the....

VANG: AHEPA

KAMILOS: It's mostly...you know they have luncheons, and speakers, and dinners.
And of course, they don't do it anymore. You know that's why everyone
put on their [mumbles].

VANG: When did they start doing the dinners and stop doing them?

KAMILOS: They what?

VANG: When did the dinners stop?

KAMILOS: They have some functions three or four times a year.

VANG: How did you meet your spouse?

KAMILOS: At church.

VANG: At church?

KAMILOS: Yes.

VANG: Was your spouse Greek or Greek American?

KAMILOS: Yes, she's Greek American. She was born here in Sacramento [and] raised
in Roseville.

VANG: And was her family also involved in the Greek community?

KAMILOS: Yes.

VANG: So both you guys attended Greek school?

KAMILOS: She did in Roseville. They had a Greek teacher up there. I went to
Washington School. They had classes there.

VANG: So where there um...Was the Greek language also taught?

KAMILOS: The what?

VANG: Was the Greek language also taught there?

KAMILOS: Yeah. Do you mean the Greek language?

VANG: Yes.

KAMILOS: No, no. Yes, it was. Yeah, the Greek language was taught there.

VANG: At Washington or was it just at?

KAMILOS: Washington Elementary School on 18th and E in downtown Sacramento.

VANG: Was it important to you or your family to marry inside the Greek community?

KAMILOS: Not really.

VANG: Your parents wouldn't mind?

KAMILOS: My mother didn't like me going out with American girls. [laughs]

VANG: Oh. Did she want...Did she want you to marry someone back in Greece?

KAMILOS: No, not back in Greece. Just marry a Greek girl here but it was by accident that I married...I always went out with American girls. One time I took out a Greek girl and I don't know if I should tell or not. And her parents, and I was only seventeen then. You know, still in high school. They had us married, like as if we were going to get marry. I said naw forget it, no more Greek girls and I wound up marrying a Greek girl.

VANG: Oh. [laughs] Do you have children? If so how many, and ages, and names.

KAMILOS: I have Gerry. He's forty six. He in business for himself here. He's a land developer. I have George. He's forty-four. It's spelled with a G. [Kamilos noticed that Vang had spelled Gerry with a J instead of a G in her notes.]

VANG: Oh a G.

KAMILOS: It's just like a J.

VANG: Oh. [laughs] So Gerry is GERRY. Okay.

KAMILOS: [laughs] George owns a general construction company up in Placerville. I have my daughter, Debbie, which is a...she's forty-one. She's with the *Sacramento Bee* and she's in advertising.

VANG: Where did they go to school?

KAMILOS: You mean here in Sacramento?

VANG: Uh hum.

KAMILOS: Okay. Gerry—You want it from the grammar school?

VANG: Sure, from the grammar school up.

KAMILOS: Let's see, he [Gerry] went to Bancroft, Hubert Bancroft Elementary. Einstein was the middle school and he graduated from Hiram Johnson. George went also to Bancroft, and Einstein and then he graduated from Rio Americano. And my daughter, she went to Bancroft, Kick Carson, they changed the boundaries at that time and she graduated from Rio Americano High School. Oh, I didn't give you the rest. Did you want the rest?

VANG: Sure.

KAMILOS: Gerry, he graduated from Cal Poly in Mechanical Engineering and from USC [with] a master's [degree] in Petroleum Engineering and from Saint Mary's a master's degree in Business. George [graduated from] Sacramento City College; he had an associate degree in Business. Debbie, she graduated from, she went to Consumnes River College, graduated from Sierra College, then she went to Chico State where she got her degree in Graphic Design then she went to San Jose State and got her degree in Advertising. That's it, that's enough.

VANG: Did they go to Greek school?

KAMILOS: Did they attend Greek school?

VANG: Uh hum.

KAMILOS: Not too much. A little bit.

VANG: Not too much. Do you remember any of their Greek school teachers' names?

KAMILOS: No. Oh yeah, I did too. There was a Rena Polis [phonetic], we used to call her in Greek, we called her the Scalla [phonetic]. Ester Polis, we had so many [Greek teachers]. When I was going to Greek school we had a new teacher every year. And I only could get pass the first...I couldn't even get pass the first grade. So...I can speak Greek fluently but I can't read or write it.

VANG: Did they regularly attend church with you or Sunday school?

KAMILOS: Are they what?

VANG: Did your children attend church with you?

KAMILOS: Yes. Every Sunday and they attended Sunday school. The two boys were alter boys...until they were eighteen years old they were still alter boys right after they graduated out of high school.

VANG: Was it important to you as parents that your children develop a Greek identity?

KAMILOS: Is it what now?

VANG: Is it important to you?

KAMILOS: Yes. Yeah. It is very important that they have the Greek identity and they're raising their children that way. You know, the Greek culture.

VANG: Can you talk a bit about how you tried as parents to instill that in them?

KAMILOS: Say what?

VANG: Can you talk a bit about how you instill that in them?

KAMILOS: How I, uh?

VANG: How you raised them to be...

KAMILOS: Raised them? Oh. My wife and I were always there for them. Any time they have a problem, whether it was good or bad, we always was right there to listen. We never ignored them or say that, you know, I don't have time. We always made time and figured that they were more important to

have the right knowledge to become prominent citizens. We just work with them and we're pretty proud because they turned out to be real good.

VANG: Were they involved in the Greek folk dance groups or any other organizations?

KAMILOS: No. At the time, they didn't have the folk dance groups but they were involved with a lot of activities that were for children in the Greek church. [not sure of the name that he mentioned] when he was president of the youth group. All of my kids were involved.

VANG: Did they attend summer day camp?

KAMILOS: Yes they did?

VANG: At St. Nicholas Ranch?

KAMILOS: No. That was before their time.

VANG: That was before. Okay.

KAMILOS: Yeah. That was after, that has only been about the last twenty years.

VANG: That they've had that?

KAMILOS: Yeah.

VANG: Can you explain a little about what that is? What St. Nicholas Ranch is?

KAMILOS: It's like a retreat. It's right above San Jose, no Fresno. It's where they have different-. You know, I can't really say because I've never been there.

VANG: Oh. Different activities?

KAMILOS: Just what I know. Activities. Yeah. More it's for youth and grown-ups, for adult people. And they have different things, different programs, more of a retreat, you know, bible study and different things, it's very—for what I understand it's very, very good, very helpful for the younger kids.

VANG: Did you feel any conflicts between the American culture of your children and your Greek identity?

KAMILOS: No.

VANG: Was your family life largely centered-?

[End Tape 1, Side A]

[Session 1, April 21, 2006]

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

VANG: Okay. Let me start the question again. What was your family's social life—Oh, sorry. Was your family's social life largely centered in the Greek community?

KAMILOS: Yes, it was. It was all centered, there was always—you know—we always have to attend all the Greek activities and everything. My parents' were pretty involved in the church.

VANG: Um, hmm. So you continued that with your kids?

KAMILOS: Yes. I continued that with my kids. Now I'm trying to get my kids to do it with their kids.

VANG: Right. And are they doing that?

KAMILOS: A little bit. Not that much. They can do better.

VANG: How many grandkids did you have?

KAMILOS: I just have two. My daughter has a little boy that is six years old and my older son, he has a daughter, nine years old. The middle son is not married, still single.

VANG: And what are your great kid-I mean grandkid's names?

KAMILOS: There is a Louie [phonetic], which is Illius [phonetic] in Greek. My granddaughter is Julia.

VANG: As a youth, young adult, or adult did you feel that you experienced any bias or prejudice on account of your Greek background?

KAMILOS: No, never. I always tell people I'm Greek. I'm not afraid of it. I even speak Greek right in front of [other] people, and I don't care. If I go to a restaurant and I want to speak Greek, I speak Greek. If they don't like it they can move to another booth. [laughs]

VANG: Was ethnic prejudice or discrimination a concern of the Greek community at any time?

KAMILOS: No. We had a lot of problems back in the-when the world war II was going on and the Germans occupied Greece back then. They were—we had some—a lot of comments were made, you know. They call us different names and things when they knew you were Greek because they

knew that it was occupied, it was under German control. You see. So it was a little hard but we managed. Yeah.

VANG: Did you hear, I mean anybody like, saying those words to you back then?

KAMILOS: Say what?

VANG: Did you hear anyone like saying those words directly to you?

KAMILOS: Oh, yeah. They call you all kinds of Greek this, Greek that, you know.

VANG: Oh, names?

KAMILOS: Names. Yeah. But that's the way it was back then. Even the Italians had the same problem when Italy was a-before it was liberated. The Italians were called different names because see they were fighting us, the Allies. So we went through a little bit but not that much.

VANG: How has the Sacramento Greek American community changed in your lifetime?

KAMILOS: It's gotten bigger. You know. More activity, we didn't have that before, you know. And just like everything else, the changes—styles are different.

VANG: What activities were added that you didn't have growing up?

KAMILOS: Well, a lot of youth—we didn't have that much—we didn't have youth group until 1952 or 3 and it was mostly for older kids, from sixteen and up. There was nothing for the younger kids like they have now. They have dance group. They have the schools. We had Sunday schools but they

weren't exact as they are today. So there's a lot of changes, a lot of the better for the Greek community.

VANG: Okay. Is there anything else you would like to add that you remember?

KAMILOS: No. This is fine. Are we at the end?

VANG: Yes, we are. Okay.

KAMILOS: Of course I talk too much but that's okay.

VANG: No, no. This is just perfect. Thanks again Nick for doing this interview and the time is currently 3:17 and this is it.

[End Tape 1, Side B]